Virginia Citizen.

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CHRISTMAS.

Ring out wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light.
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow;
The year is going, let him go,
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes;
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

—Lord Alfred Tennyson.

CHRISTMAS.

"—But O, there's love for everything
That long ago took wings."

The old-time Christmas is worth retelling, if only that those whose memory runs back to the old days "befo de wah" may make the pleasant retrospect. For an old Virginia Christmas was the holiday of the year, and if not celebrated according to modern notions of decorum, was hearty and honest. Old folks looked forward to it; children lay awake at night and talked of it weeks beforehand; servants sat up o' nights and ruminated over it, and all over the neighborhood people who met each other on the road, or at the post-office, talked about Christmas that was coming. The children who had married and gone away to other States, they were writing and saying that they would surely come if coming were possible; and of all the days of the good year, so nearly ended, Christmas was the day of reunion and joyful merry making.

Out on the lawn, in front of the "quarters" the darkies gathered. It was Christmas Eve, and Tom, the fiddler, had brought his instrument with him, and a fire was kindled. The night was warm for the season, each foot was atune for a dance, and such merry-making there was to be sure. The problem of life—"what shall we eat, what shall we drink, wherewithal shall we be clothed?" had no place in their thought. It was literally "come day, go day" with these children of the Orient. And they danced, laughed, chattered nearly through the night.

In the house it was a busy time. Stockings to fill, presents to be gotten in place, little remembrances to be sent away to such as could not be at home; children in their rooms, snugly tucked away in their feather beds, they too much excited to sleep. The fire was never out in the old house, at least in winter. Big back-logs of heart-hickory were piled high, and if the curfew was done, it was only heaps of ashes piled on the glowing coals, to be raked out in the early morning and fresh wood added. Hickory, maple, and such was in stock—it took an ox-cart load of wood each day to keep up the fires. And that fire-place! It was wide and deep, so wide that it took in a cord-stick, and room then in the corner for a little darkey to roast his shins.

The scene shifts to the morning. Just why joyfulness expresses itself in the juvenile breast with noise is hard to say, but the boys made such a racket! Guns were fired, pig-bladders, that had been blown up at hog-killing time, were exploded; down at the blacksmith-shop the anvil was upturned and the deep hole in the bottom was partly filled with powder, a plug driven in and through a hole in the plug a slow-match inserted, and this was set off, making a noise like a cannon. As for the stockings, they were filled of course, and little Jack did not get the switch that was threatened to be put in for him, but did get a tin horn with which he made all the noise possible for a small boy to make.

Out in the kitchen great doings were going on. Old Sally was perspiring over the fire; not your modern cook-stove, but a great, wide open hearth—"hearth" she called it—with a huge crane swung from the side, and more pots, kettles, pans, ovens and trays than were ever seen outside of that particular kitchen. Swung on a string in front of the fire was the turkey, basting before the blaze, and a dripping pan set under caught the drippings, with which she from time to time anointed the roasting fowl. If the children rushed in with the old-time "Christmas gift, aunt Sally", she brusquely ordered them out. "Git out'n dis kitchen, you-alls; how I gwine cook all dis dinner wid you in de way?" But she dived into the closet and fished out apples, walnuts and good things she had stored, with "Now took dese an git out'n hayar en doan bother me—I'se busy", and the children scampered off.

In the great house the scene was no less interesting. The judge, the doctor and the major had ridden over early. Each was a character. The judge, small, lean, with great brows that so overshadowed his eyes that it looked as if he might let them down and close the vision entirely. The eyes keen, searching, with judgment of men and things in them. Many a criminal at the bar, seeing those piercing orbs turned on his, confessed guilt at the moment. The major, fat, jolly, with red face and baldish head, fond of a joke, fond of a toddy, fond of a good dinner, fond of a frolic or a fox hunt. The doctor, quiet, meditative, introspective, with kindly glance and quick intuition. He was the oracle of the neighborhood. Pater familias met them at the door with "Walk in, gentlemen, I wish you the happy day; This way, please", and he led them to the sideboard. It was a curious old bit of furniture, with four drawers, deep enough for a decanter, and each drawer divided into three spaces for decanters—twelve in all. Thus it was fifty or seventy years ago. All took their drink of mornings, none seemed to care to take much or many, but it was the custom of the day. And it was "Your health, sir", and "My compliments, my dear Major", and such like exchanges of sentiment. Rides up a neighbor, a young man of twenty, he bowing awkwardly to Sue, she fair-haired and seventeen, with mild gray eyes and blushing cheeks. How it does happen! She is standing under the mistletoe, and the young man makes a dash for her, she scampering off into the hall, and out there is heard "don't," and "you mustn't" and "please stop", all ending in a more subdued noise like the popping of cork from bottle, and both reappear, red in face and very happy.

Oh, it was a merry Christmas! Not much going to church, for that was miles away and the custom of the country was not such in great part; but there was fun, jollity, merriment, happiness, and the greatest of good neighborliness. And it lasted a week. Christmas festivities were kept up until New Year, with visitings, excursions, dances, frolickings, courting, an occasional fox hunt for the elders, and coon and 'possum hunting for the juniors.

There was one incident that should be written down. The lady of the house called for her carriage before noon, and whispered to the driver a word he seemed to flinch at, but the carriage rolled away and returned in time for the dinner. It had brought to the manse an old and poor relation, one who, if he had brought his troubles on himself, as indeed most of us do, was not forgotten in this time of "good gifts to men". Old, feeble, with quavering voice and shaking steps, he takes his place at the table, and he too has his Christmas with the family and guests. What if he had led a disorderly life? What if he had, as most thought, disgraced the family? It was Christmas and there was no contumely for him that day.

It was all long, long ago. And long since Sue, the fair-haired, has grandchildren of her own, the major has ceased to drill the militia, the judge has gone to that bar where he himself is judged, the doctor has settled in a land where no man shall say, "I am sick," and the gay and thoughtless negroes are scattered to the winds or dying in the purlius of the great city.

The pageant fades, the old times go, go, are gone. Yet there was much of it to rejoice in. Men were honest and honorable, women were pure and modest. There were good, wholesome Christians in that day, even if the habits of the time seem to us incongruous with the Christ-life. And it is well to take the old books, the old legends of the old Virginia, and studying these, see if from them a lesson—many lessons—of purity, honor, nobility of character, may not be learned, lessons that may profit us in this day of the strenuous life.

JAMES B. HODGKIN.

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS MORNING.

Hark! a burst of heavenly music,
From a band of seraphs bright,
Suddenly to earth descending,
In the calm and silent night;
To the shepherds of Judea,
Watching in the earliest dawn,
Lo, they bear the joyful tidings,
Jesus, Prince of Peace, is born!

Sweet and clear those angel voices,
Echoing through the starry sky,
As they chant the heavenly chorus,
"Glory be to God on high!"

And this joyful Christmas morning
Breaking o'er the world below,
Tells again the wondrous story
Shepherds heard so long ago.
Who shall still our tuneful voices,
Who the tide of praise shall stem,
Which the blessed angels taught us,
In the fields of Bethlehem?

Hark! we hear again the chorus,
Ringing through the starry sky;
And we join the heavenly anthem,
"Glory be to God on high!"

Mrs. M. N. Meigs.

CHRISTMAS NIGHT.

The hour is late, the night stands still,
The childhood voices fade away—
Fade far adown the slumber hill,
Faint echoing with the long day's play.
I am the last; I linger there
Beside the scattered books and toys,
The trinkets heaped about my chair,
The implements of childhood joys.
I droop, I drowse, while to me come
The sound of trumpet and of drum.

Far off and low; now swift, now slow,
The laughter of their lips drift by;
And then the little forms I know
In romp and grand review draw nigh—
The captain of the tinsel sword,
The soldiers of the wooden gun,
A gay, a blithe, a merry horde,
They march before me in the sun—
And tin horns blow, and flags array
This army of the childheart fray.

Ah, Christmas night is all my own,
For long sweet rest beside the hearth,
With all the little revelers flown,
While round me echoes all their mirth;
All the sweet music of the day,
The gleaming eyes, the fun-flushed cheeks;
The songs on lips so glad, so gay,
The language that the childheart speaks;
Around me while the house is still,
They echo, and my heartstrings thrill,

—The Bentztown Bard.

A "REBEL'S" RECOLLECTIONS

(Written for the VA. CITIZEN.)

I, E. Tyler Davis, was born on the 8th of November, 1842. My father's name was John B. Davis. I was born in Wicomico district, in Northumberland Co., Va., and within a few hundred yards of what was then known as "Dameron's chapel;" it is now known as Mila chapel. After a few years my father moved up in the forest near what is now Miskimon, and what schooling I got was at a private school taught by Josiah Robinson, at what is now Smyrna Church, but was known in those times as Chinquapin Chapel and later still as Forest Chapel. I was only at this school one session, and this was in the year 1853 or 1854. From that time until the Civil war broke out I worked with my father on the farm.

On the 17th of April, 1861, I enlisted as a private in Co. G, 40th Vol. Infantry, we enlisting as Virginia troops. Captain Caleb Letchfield was captain of our company; 1st Lieutenant, Robert Crowder; 2nd Lieutenant, John George; 3rd Lieutenant, Thos. Crowder; 4th Lieutenant, Thos. Effort.

On the 26th of May, 1861, we re-inlisted as Confederate troops, and were mustered into the Confederate service as such at Heathsville.

Soon after this the regiment moved from Heathsville to Oldham's Cross Roads, stayed there a few days and then moved to Boyd's Hole, on the Potomac river, and there we picketed the Potomac river at Colonial Beach (it was then known as White Point), Mathias Point and other places along the river.

The regiment was ordered to Bull Run, or Manassas, to take part in operations in that section, but before we reached there the battle was fought, and we got news that Beauregard had whipped the enemy in a big battle, and we were then put in camp at Brooks Station, in Stafford county. In July, 1861, while the regiment was in camp at Brooks Station, Capt. Letchfield resigned his captaincy of our company, and we elected as Captain Walter Bowie, of Westmoreland county. No better man or officer ever lived than he. He was good to his men, considerate of their welfare, congenial in camp, and as brave in action as any man who ever drew a sword in defence of his home.

When we inlisted, our company was armed with some of the rifles that were taken at Harpers Ferry when John Brown was captured. These arms had been sent to the "Northumberland Riflemen," a militia company, and they were turned over to us. These guns were rifle-bored and I used mine until it became so leaded that I couldn't get a ball in it.

In the fall of 1861, we went into winter quarters at Acquia Creek, on the Potomac river. Our tents were good loghouses, daubed in, and they were comfortable.

We staid at Acquia Creek about a month, and then the regiment was ordered back to Heathsville. Were there a short time and were then ordered to build winter quarters at Smyrna Church, and we started to build log tents there, across the road in front of the church, in a piece of pine woods that has since been cleared up, and is now in cultivation. We didn't finish our tents before the regiment was ordered to Farnham Church. We staid at Farnham Church about a week, and were ordered to Fredericksburg. The regiment was marched to Union wharf on the Rappahannock near what is now Sharp's wharf. There we were put aboard the steamer Virginia and taken to Fredericksburg. We were put into camp on the Fredericksburg side of the river, and staid there a few days. One evening two companies of our regiment were ordered across the Rappahannock to the Falmouth side to do picket duty. These companies were the Heathsville Guards, Capt. T. Edwin Betts, and our Co. G., Capt. Bowie. We were stationed on one road and the Heathsville Guards on another. I had been sent forward as a vidette. This was towards morning; when I heard firing on the other road. The enemy had advanced on the road where the Heathsville Guards were posted, and several of the yankees were killed, and one man of the Heathsville Guards was killed, whose name was —— Swain, and to the best of my recollection this was the first man killed in our regiment. When our company heard the firing on the other road it fell back and recrossed the long bridge at Falmouth. When I found that my company had gone back I went back also, and when I got to the bridge from Falmouth across the Rappahannock the bridge had been set on fire by our soldiers and it was burning in a number of places, but I picked my way across, the last man that ever crossed that bridge. When I got back across the bridge the Heathsville Guards had gotten across the river and when I got over I saw Major Henry DeShields leading his horse with a wounded yankee soldier sitting in the saddle, and this was the first wounded soldier I ever saw.

The next night Capt. John Stakes, of Co. A., from Wicomico, Northumberland county, took four men whose names I can't now remember and went up the southside of the Rappahannock until they reached a ford and forded the river and killed some of the yankee pickets and reforded the river and got back to the army safely.

In a day or two after this our regiment was ordered toward Richmond. We went into camp at a place called Stony Hill, but staid there only a short time before the regiment was then put on picket duty along the Chicahominy river. We continued this duty until we were ordered to move, crossed the "Meadow Bridge," and the first battle our regiment was ever in was the battle of Mechanicsville, and ours was the first command that fired a gun on the Confederate side in that fight. From this time on our regiment was almost constantly engaged, until McClelland crossed the James river after the battle of Malvern Hill. After the Federal army had crossed I walked along the shore of the James river and saw their armes stacked on the shore, where they had left them in their hurry to cross the river.

The next general engagement our regiment took part in was the second battle of Manassas. At this time, and while the army and our regiment were in Maryland, I was sick in a hospital in Lynchburg, the only time I was unfit for duty during the whole war. I rejoined the army on its return from Maryland. After some time our regiment was in camp at Camp Gregg. We were ordered from there to Fredericksburg. We reached Fredericksburg the 12th or 13th of December, 1862, and were posted on Marye's Heights. That night every man was ordered to "lay on his arms," and by sunrise we were ordered to fall in line of battle. Soon after we formed line of battle we saw a Federal soldier ride from towards the river carrying a white flag. As soon as he came with the flag we were ordered to stack arms and I was told that it was a signal that they wanted to bury their dead. I got a pass from my captain and went down to where they were digging the trenches and throwing the men in. After this battle we went back into winter quarters and staid there until the spring of 1863.

Our regiment was heavily engaged in the battle of Chancellorsville, but I was not with it in that engagement as I had been detailed to guard the ordnance train.

Our regiment remained in the region between Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg until the army moved to cross the river on its way to Pennsylvania. We went to Gettysburg and were engaged there on the second day and were ready to charge to support Gen. Archer, but his command was badly cut to pieces and the General was captured. Soon after this our brigade was reinforced and we charged, and succeeded in getting on a hill and were ordered to lie down, where we remained until reinforced. While we were on this hill a sharpshooter, who was posted near an old house, kept shooting and seemed to be trying to kill Col. John M. Brockenbrough, and he was coming so close to him that Col. B. said, "boys, kill that d——yankee," and Dick Savin and myself both dropped on our knees, took aim and fired at the same time. The sharpshooter fell, but I don't know who killed him.

On the 3rd day at Gettysburg our regiment was in action; we charged when Pickett's division charged on that day, being on their right and supporting them.

After the battle of Gettysburg was over our regiment came back with the army to Virginia. While the army was falling back towards the Potomac one night a strong picket was posted to cover the retreat of the army. A number of men were detailed from the 40th for this purpose, and I was one of them. Lieut. Ben Stewart was in charge of the picket from the 40th Virginia, and we stayed on our post until nearly day when Lieut. Stewart told us we had better be leaving there as the army had been gone since early in the night, and we left and followed the army. We went to Williamsport and just as we got there the last of Stonewall brigade were in the water fording the river. When three of us—Lieut. Stewart, W. N. Cundiff and myself—reached the river, all of the other pickets of the 40th had been captured. While we were fording the river a squad of Federal cavalry rode down on the hill at Williamsport and fired on us, but did us no harm. After I crossed I went towards Falling Waters and saw our army crossing there and sat beneath a persimmon tree. I saw the fighting between our people and the enemy, and rejoined my command when it crossed the river at that point.

Our regiment was also engaged in the battle of Mine Run. There we supported Gen. Pegram's artillery.

Our next important engagement was the battle of the Wilderness, where we were heavily engaged the first evening, and again in the morning. At Spotsylvania C. H., we fought in breastworks, and it was one of the hottest fights I was ever in, and we could not have held our position but for the artillery which supported us—Pegram's on one side and Crenshaw's on the other. During this fight I saw James McNeal, of Capt. Sydnor's Co., of the 40th., and Tazewell Baylie, of Capt. Stakes' Co., same regiment—when we drove the enemy back—jump over the works and capture several of the Federal colors and bring them in the works.

Our command also saw heavy service at Cold Harbor, and went on finally to Petersburg, where we were entrenched during the winter of 1864-5. We were almost constantly engaged, but remained in the works all the time.

During the whole of the war I was with my command except for about a week—in the hospital in Lynchburg with fever—and in every engagement I was on the firing line except at the battle of Fort Archie and the battle on the Weldon railroad below Petersburg. I was detailed as one of the letter bearers of my regiment at Fort Archie. My fellow letter bearers, or the ones who helped me to bear the letter, were: Robt. Dunaway, who is still living, Lewis Boen and William C. Brown; the last two are dead. When I was detailed for like service at the battle on the Weldon Railroad my fellow letter bearers were William C. Brown, Robert Dunaway, Joseph Sampson in this engagement. My Comrade Joe. Sampson was carrying the letter folded up on his back and when we came to look at it, three bullets holes were found in it, but Sampson had not been struck at all.

Soon after this battle an incident occured which I shall never forget, how it affected my comrade and myself at the time, and made us divide our scanty rations with a woman and her hungry babes.

Lieut. Thos. Effort and myself went out foraging to see if we could get anything from the good people for us to eat. We had but a very little of our rations left. The first place we went to for this purpose, we called and a lady came out to her yard gate to meet us. Lieut. Effort told her our errand and asked her to give us something to eat. Tears came to her eyes and she told us that her husband like ourselves was then a soldier in the Confederate army, and that the yankees had been to her house and taken the last thing she had to eat on earth and that she didn't have a crust for herself or her three little children. Her story touched my comrade and myself, and we opened our haversacks and gave her what we had left in them. "War is a hard trade", but it doesn't take all of the pity and sympathy out of a man.

I staid with my command in all of the hard places it found itself. I was never told that I shirked a duty that was mine as a soldier and this heritage I hand down to my children. No command in that great army had braver or kinder officers than those who commanded the old 40th and Co. G. My record as a Confederate soldier has never been questioned that I know of; if any one has any criticism to make of it, I hope they will do it while I am living; and if so let them make it in the VIRGINIA CITIZEN where I will meet it, as there are wise men now living who knew me in war, with whom I touched elbows and kept step, when we faced death and dared to do our duty in the face of what seemed certain destruction. I have written this, as I want to leave with my camp some record of my service as a soldier of my country.

In my old age I should like to hear from some of my old comrades of the 40th, and from my comrades of the Lawson-Ball Camp. I hope they will write out their recollections and publish them in some of the papers. Those of us who have not yet answered the final roll-call would be cheered and refreshed to have a word from you, my old comrades. I often go over those old scenes with some of the old boys of the 40th. Living in the same neighborhood with me are three men, viz. W. D. Haynie, W. T. Marsh and R. S. Marsh. We grew up as boys together in the same neighborhood, we played together then, and then we took part in that rough game called war and I want to say for them that the South had no truer or more loyal sons than they, and there were no stouter or braver soldiers in all the hosts of the South's defenders. They did their duty in war, they have done it in peace; all honor to them. There are thousands of others like them; I have named these three only because we have all been life-long friends. All three of these men bear marks of valiant service on their bodies.

TRUCKERS' NOTES.

The seeded wheat area of the United States this winter is over thirty-three and-a-half millions acres. The general condition of the wheat is reported over the average.

The experiment of growing walnuts on oak trees is being conducted successfully by E. M. Price of Sacramento, Cal., who has a large number of new species about his home. The nuts grew about three times as large as the ones in the markets. The product is the result of cutting the limbs of walnut trees and grafting them into stocky oaks.

SAMPLE OF OUR WORK.
This monument was designed, executed and erected to the memory of Dr. Lawrence Gunyon Mitchell, at Farnham Baptist Church, Richmond Co., Va.